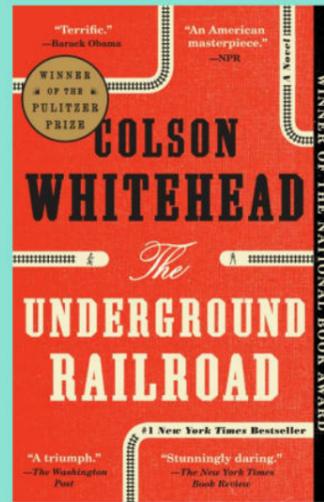


LIFESTYLE

11 IMPACTFUL BOOKS TO READ ABOUT BLACK HISTORY DURING BLACK HISTORY MONTH AND BEYOND

Best books to read about Black history



Written by [Kaleb A. Brown](#), News Staff Writer who ties events you care about to products you need.
Updated February 7, 2024

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Black History Month is here, a month-long celebration of Black culture and history. While there are many ways to celebrate the occasion, from going to museums and supporting Black creatives, another great way to observe Black History Month is by reading books that delve into the ins and outs of Black history and brushing up on what it all means today.

Whether you're looking to take an academic look into a particular subject, want to know how history informs modern-day problems, or prefer getting lost in fictional narratives, there's a book somewhere out there for you that can give you just that and more when it comes to learning about Black History Month. Here are just a few of the many great books available to read about it on your favorite **Kindle**, **e-reader**, or good ol' fashioned print.

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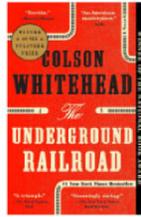
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1. The Underground Railroad

Colson Whitehead's National Book Award-winning historical fiction novel *The Underground Railroad* imagines the underground railroad as a literal system of subterranean railways. ***The Underground Railroad*** mixes thrills with the horrors of our

history, combining to create a very provocative novel that stays on the reader's mind long after they've finished the final page.



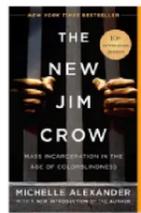
The Underground Railroad (Pulitzer Prize Winner) (National Book Award Winner) (Oprah's Book Club)

Read this fantastical take on the famous underground freedom movement.

BUY NOW
at Amazon

2. The New Jim Crow

The disenfranchisement that America's Black population faced under Jim Crow is something that ostensibly ended during the Civil Rights era of the 1960s. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, however, posits that Jim Crow never really left, it just molted into a new shape. In her hard-hitting 2010 non-fiction book, civil rights activist Michelle Alexander delves into the racist tendencies that fuel America's modern prison industrial complex.



The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness

There is much to learn about how mass incarceration in America took shape.

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at Amazon

3. Hidden Figures

The public perception of the space race is dominated by the likes of Buzz Aldrin and Neil Armstrong. This is not their story. This is the story about the Black mathematicians or "human computers" who were vital in the success of America's aeronautics divisions from World War II throughout the Cold War. Margot Lee Shetterly's *Hidden Figures* tells the true stories, struggles and successes of the women who helped America win the Space Race.



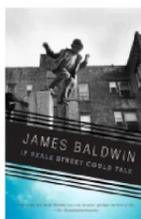
Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race

Learn about the Black women behind the Space Race.

BUY NOW
at Amazon

4. If Beale Street Could Talk

This Harlem love story by one of the most celebrated Black writers of all time is as hard-hitting today as it was when it was released in 1974. James Baldwin's classic, *If Beale Street Could Talk*, follows 19-year-old Tish who must navigate a pregnancy while her fiancé, Fonny, is imprisoned for a crime he did not commit. In 2018, *If Beale Street Could Talk* was adapted into a film by the Academy Award-winning director, Barry Jenkins.



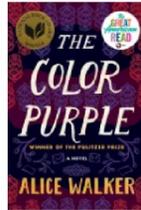
If Beale Street Could Talk (Vintage International)

This Harlem love story is a classic and the source of an Academy Award-nominated movie.

BUY NOW
at Amazon

5. The Color Purple

Alice Walker's Pulitzer-winning *The Color Purple* is a classic of Black literature. Taking place in the early 20th century, *The Color Purple* is told via a series of letters directed to God from the main character, Celie. The story showcases perseverance in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds, as well as the power of familial love. The book has seen two theatrical adaptations – **the 1985 classic starring Whoopi Goldberg, and an Oscar-nominated 2023 musical adaptation.**



The Color Purple

This Pulitzer-winning novel has two film adaptations.

BUY NOW
at Amazon

6. The Bluest Eye

The Bluest Eye was Toni Morrison's debut piece of work and it certainly made an impact when it was released in 1970. Taking place during the Great Depression, *The Bluest Eye* is a haunting story that explores racialized beauty standards and the harm that it can cause. If you're thinking of checking the book out, bear in mind that it's an affecting, intense read.



The Bluest Eye (Vintage International)

Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* is an intense classic.

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at Amazon

7. Kindred

The speculative fiction maestro Octavia Butler's *Kindred* is one of the most unique time travel stories put to paper, not just because of the concept of time travel, but in how haunting the entire story is. In *Kindred*, our main character, Dana, is pulled from 1980s L.A. to the Antebellum South, showing that the past, the very threads that make us who we are today, are not always things to be celebrated, oftentimes needing to serve as warnings instead. In 2022, the novel received a TV adaptation by **Hulu**.



Kindred

Octavia E. Butler weaves a haunting time travel story.

BUY NOW
at Amazon

8. Roots

Spawning not one, but three television miniseries, as well as a television film, ***Roots: The Saga of an American Family*** and its character Kunta Kinte was a sensation when it was released in 1976. Based on author Alex Haley's family history, *Roots* offers a decidedly more uplifting take on Black family history, focusing on the success that follows intense struggle.



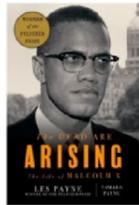
Roots: The Saga of an American Family

Roots remains an uplifting sensation.

BUY NOW
at Amazon

9. The Dead Are Arising

The Dead are Arising is the Pulitzer-winning biography of Civil Rights leader Malcolm X that captures the larger-than-life man as he has never been seen before. The pages within this book are not simply dry biography but are alive with the drama and purpose that filled Malcolm X's tumultuous and influential life.



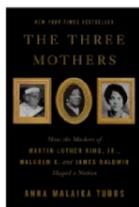
The Dead Are Arising: The Life of Malcolm X

Delve into the life of Malcolm X.

BUY NOW
at Amazon

10. The Three Mothers

Many know of **Martin Luther King Jr.**, Malcolm X, and James Baldwin, yet few know of their childhoods nor how the women in their lives shaped them. Anna Malaika Tubbs' *The Three Mothers* brings these women to the forefront of history, showing how their influence would go on to shape America. This book is more than a celebration of history; it's a celebration of Black motherhood.



The Three Mothers: How the Mothers of Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and James Baldwin Shaped a Nation

Learn about the mothers behind three Black leaders.

BUY NOW
at Amazon

11. Poems by and about Phillis Wheatley

Phillis Wheatley marks a significant first, as she was the first known African American woman to publish a book with her 1773 *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*. Wheatley's complete work has been published by Penguin Classics.

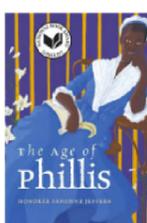


Complete Writings

The complete writings of Phillis Wheatley, the first published Black American poet.

BUY NOW
at Amazon

In 2020, Honorée Fanonne Jeffers published her own work of poems from the perspective of Phillis Wheatley. This collection titled *The Age of Phillis* examines Phillis Wheatley as a person instead of the symbol she's typically seen as.



The Age of Phillis (Wesleyan Poetry Series)

Check out this fascinating take on Phillis' life.

BUY NOW
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